

The P. & O. S. N. Co.'s s. s. Manila left

Singapore for this port on the 1st instant,
at 10 a.m.

THE O. & C. S. a. *Belgie*, with mails, &c., left San Francisco for this port, via Yokohama, on Nov. 30.

THE Rev. Dr. Leonard, Chaplain to the Venerable Bishop Foster of the United States, will preach in the Methodist Church at 10.30 a.m. to-morrow.

MR E. A. Ram, of Mr Granville Sharp's office, has, we understand, been appointed by His Excellency the Governor to the acting position of Sanitary Superintendent and Secretary to the Sanitary Board.

To-morrow morning, between 9 and 10.30 o'clock, the steam launch *Dispersing* carrying the Bethel flag, will call alongside any vessel hoisting cods pennant O, to convey men ashore to 11 a.m. service at St. Peter's (Seamen's) Church, returning about 12.30.

WE understand that all heads of departments have been directed to attend in the Council Chamber on Monday next, to add, we presume, some lustre to the formerly somewhat dreary re-opening of the winter session of the Legislative Council. It would certainly be an improvement if the meetings of the Council were attended by the general public.

THE Band of the Hongkong Regiment made its first public appearance last night when it played at the Officers' Mess at Kowloon. Under the careful training of Mr J. Murphy, bandmaster to the 1st Shropshire Light Infantry, the band has made wonderfully rapid progress, and when it is remembered that all the instrumentalists are natives of India it must be said that the performance

creditable. The band played again this afternoon at the Cricket Ground.

**SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE DES
CHARBONNAGES DU TONKIN.**

An extraordinary general meeting of the above company was held to-day. Hon. C. P. Chatter presided and there were also present Messrs C. Jantzen, H. Hopius, E. F. Alford, F. Jordan, E. Raekiel, V. H. Lewis, M. S. Sassoon, M. Grote, E. N. Mody, S. S. Benjamin, J. S. Moses.

On the motion of Mr Hopius, Mr Chatter took the chair.

The Chairman said—Gentlemen, you have been summoned here to-day to deliberate and vote upon certain questions of great importance to this Company. What these questions are you will have learnt from the order of the day, given on the notice convening the meeting, but before I ask you to express your opinions upon them, I will beg your permission to make a few remarks upon certain matters which have occurred since our last ordinary meeting on the 21st of the last May. At that time the Chairman, Mr E. H. Chaffin, informed you that the ruinous royalty of £ 1.25 per ton imposed upon our coal had been reduced to a fixed charge of 50 centimes. This, though a very important concession, was still a very heavy burden on our struggling enterprise. We had further decrease was urgently petitioned for by ourselves and our neighbours of Kého. Fortunately for the coal industries of Tonkin, they have in M. de Lencastre a Governor whose liberal policy has always had in view the removal of all obstacles which obstructed them, with the object of furthering their development, a development with

which the progress and prosperity of the countries under the French Protectorate are so closely bound up. A Commissioner

therefore appointed, composed of the members of the chief collieries, seated by Government Engineers, which had proposed that the existing royalty of 30 centimes should be divided equally between the colliers and the State. On one half, that is, 15 centimes, the *droits de Statistique*, a fee for the inspection fee for ships entering Tonkin harbours, should be equally diminished for the colliers during the service of the mines, and the important reductions should be made in the charges of the exchange duties. These recommendations, strongly endorsed by H. E. the Governor-General have been sent to France for the confirmation of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, who have therefore no doubt that, when they should be adopted, they will not only considerably dilate upon the very great advantages thus secured to the company which will be thereby relieved from the burdensome charges which weighed upon it, but will also remove charges which would have been serious for the Government in the lowering of prosperity, but which were simply injurious to a new company struggling with every species of difficulty in a far off country. Such apparently was the view given by H. E. de Lanessan, and it would be difficult to see how the State could have obtained more important advantages, moral and material, conferred upon the Tonkin colliers by the present enlightened policy pursued by the French Protectorate under his able guidance. For the purpose of affording the economies, we had to make sacrifices in relinquishing the Government to receive us, at all events partially, of the charges that bore so heavily upon us, but we have used our utmost efforts to reduce the expenses as far as possible in our internal management, and we have endeavoured to ensure the absence of our Director General, and urgent representations to the Government left in charge to practise all

expenses to the lowest level consistent with the proper conduct of operations.

his answer was invariably the same— that this had already been done, and that any further reductions would result in the loss of the village. He was, however, found on his arrival that by the exercise of a little firmness, important reductions could be made in the wages of the coolies, which were already high, and in the prices of the various articles of the household. A couple of days later, remarks in his report: 'The wages (of the coolies) are far higher than those which they can obtain elsewhere. They are assisted, at very small expense, by the Government, to procure the necessaries of life, and are consequently more healthy and comfortable than the coolies in their villages: their great temperature and few needs cause them to find that wages very sufficient.' These words seem to show that our coolies are very well treated, and, though at first they are naturally discontented, that they are very happy when they are well paid and

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